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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance:
Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Letter dated 21 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to attach hereto a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, dated 19 August 2017, on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 69 (a) and (c).

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 21 August 2017 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day

19 August marks the World Humanitarian Day, proclaimed in 2008 by the UN General Assembly. This day serves to draw attention to the civilians, affected by the humanitarian crises, and to advocate for the importance of providing life-saving assistance to them. It reminds all Member States of the need to uphold international humanitarian law and to protect civilian population. In 2017 the key message of the International Day is '*Civilians are not a target*'.

This day takes on special significance for Ukraine due to the humanitarian consequences of the ongoing Russian aggression. According to the United Nations, at least 2,500 civilians have been killed during three years of war in Donbas; the total number of injured is estimated at 7,000-9,000. The war continues to inflict injuries and take human lives: in the first half of the 2017 there were recorded more than 400 civilian causalities — a 61 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016.

The ongoing ceasefire violations, large areas contaminated by mines presents threat to the lives of nearly 800,000 Ukrainians living near the 'contact line'. OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM) has been regularly reporting numerous cases of presence of armed positions, weapons and armoured vehicles of the Russia-backed illegal armed groups close to populated areas, occupation of private properties and administrative buildings, particularly schools, kindergartens and hospitals.

About 1.6 mln. Ukrainians were forced to flee their homes and registered as internally displaced persons, amounting to 4 per cent of Ukraine's overall population. According to the United Nations, more than 3.8 million people residing on both sides of 'contact line' are in need of humanitarian assistance.

In its 2017 thematic report "Hardship for conflict-affected civilians in eastern Ukraine" the SMM observed that restrictions, imposed by the pro-Russian illegal armed groups on the access of international humanitarian aid organizations to occupied areas, hindered the delivery of relief supplies as well as the implementation of protection-related activities. Of particular concern is a continued practice of sending the so-called Russian humanitarian convoys to the armed militants-controlled areas of Donbas in violation of the Ukrainian legislation and international law. In this regard, we demand from the Russian Federation as aggressor State and occupying power to unequivocally implement the Minsk agreements, in particular to ensure safe access, delivery, and distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Ukraine is grateful for the assistance provided by the UN organizations, International Committee of the Red Cross, other partner states and international non-governmental organizations to meet the humanitarian challenges on the occupied territories. We look forward to continued international support in this regard.

Appropriate humanitarian financing is key to address daunting humanitarian challenges facing by Ukraine as a result of the Russian aggression. In this regard, we call on donor states to redouble their efforts to mobilize funds, necessary to ensure implementation of the UN 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan in Ukraine.